



**BRIEFING: June 6, 2013 Board Meeting Agenda Item #5**

**TO:** Chairman Richard and Board Members

**FROM:** Ben Tripousis, Northern Regional Director

**DATE:** June 6, 2013

**RE:** Status Report on the Northern California Rail Partners MOU

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**Background**

Under the direction of the 2012 Business Plan and SB 1029 [full citation], the California High-Speed Rail Authority (Authority) is committed to facilitating the delivery of regional rail improvements throughout the state as a critical component of the high-speed rail program. Consequently, the Authority has partnered with a host of regional rail agencies to advance this goal and ensure that the high-speed rail system is a component of an improved and integrated statewide rail system. In Northern California, these agencies include the following:

- The California Department of Transportation (Caltrans Division of Rail) plans, improves and administers the San Joaquin and Pacific Surfliner routes.
- The Capitol Corridor Joint Powers Authority (CCJPA) contracts and provides funds for the operation and capital improvements of the Capitol Corridor intercity passenger trains between Auburn and San Jose on rights of way owned by the Union Pacific Railroad and the Caltrain/Peninsula Joint Powers Board.
- Sacramento Regional Transit (SacRT) provides regional mobility within the Sacramento region and is a member of the CCJPA.
- The San Joaquin Regional Rail Commission (SJRRC) plans, improves and administers the Altamont Corridor Express and participates in passenger rail service planning efforts which affect San Joaquin County.
- The Union Pacific and Burlington Northern Santa Fe Railroads provide freight goods movement service to businesses throughout the state.

The Authority's 2012 Business Plan calls for incremental development of the high-speed rail network utilizing a phased and blended system approach that will coordinate the development and operations of

high-speed rail with existing passenger rail systems. In turn, this approach will improve, enhance, and expand the integration of high-speed rail with intercity, regional, and local rail transportation systems. This phased and blended approach requires a series of investments in regional and intercity rail corridors to prepare for integrated service and operations.

## **Discussion**

The Authority recognizes the need for collaborative efforts with regional and state agencies to identify early investment projects along existing rail corridors that increase speed, improve safety and efficiency, and create seamless, coordinated linkages between high-speed rail, intercity, regional and local passenger rail service. In addition, the participating agencies recognize the need for a collaborative effort with the freight railroads to provide for increased passenger service on these corridors with the understanding that such increases in passenger rail services not impinge upon the railroads' ability to provide quality, competitive freight service in and through the state.

The 2012 Business Plan also prioritizes the Initial Operating Section (IOS) in the Central Valley and over the Tehachapi Mountains to close the passenger rail gap between Northern and Southern California. The build-out of the IOS will create increased passenger demand to and from the northern terminus of the high-speed rail network where existing passenger rail services currently provide significant capacity.

The participating agencies are involved in the planning, funding, construction, and operation of conventional passenger rail and light rail services between the IOS and the major metropolitan areas of Northern California, and have been working with the Authority on a Northern California Unified Rail Service to feed into the high-speed rail system. The Authority Chief Executive Officer, consistent with Board policy, has developed and circulated for signature the attached comprehensive Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) to guide participation in the collaborative development of technical studies, sharing of technical information, and regional outreach coordination on passenger rail corridors between the Central Valley, Sacramento, and the Bay Area.

The Northern California Unified Rail Service concept is meant to provide optimal one-seat ride options for the passengers from Northern to Southern California through collaboration by the participating agencies and sharing of equipment, interlining trains, joint (or "shared") track capacity, common ticketing and public information services, and leveraging funding resources aimed at creating a fully integrated rail network for California.

The goals of the partnership include the following:

1. To jointly identify and pursue a defined set of early, integrated projects and operating plans for the Northern California Unified Rail Services Concept which would make the IOS segment available for passenger service as soon as practicable. These improvements may include, but are not limited to, public safety, high quality passenger rail services, equipment, facilities and amenities, system capacity, consistent service reliability (on-time performance), connectivity to local/regional public transport services, dedicated feeder bus services integrated operations, and improved train speeds,

while preserving freight rail capacity to accommodate existing and future goods movement demand.

2. To undertake an analysis with the freight railroads to determine how to accommodate increased passenger service demand, while protecting the existing corridor capacity, whether used or unused, for future freight growth. The analysis will assume a projection of freight rail growth for the next 20-years.
3. To establish a framework for the recommendation of the candidate improvement projects for funding and implementation. The framework would include the application of criteria to prioritize candidate projects to meet projected future ridership demand for service on the IOS, address capacity issues on the existing freight lines select projects for funding consideration and a process for the partners to achieve consensus on the projects to be recommended for funding.
4. To develop an illustrative list of candidate rail improvement projects. This current list of draft projects will be further refined according to their compliance with agreed to criteria, including but not limited to, environmental clearance and Prop 1A connectivity required to support the operation of a blended high-speed rail system.
5. The participating agencies have identified approximately \$1.4 billion in capital improvements to their respective rail systems that would contribute to an integrated passenger rail system for the benefit of Northern California rail passengers and support the 2018 Northern California Blended Service Plan for the utilization and expanded success of the IOS. The participating agencies will work to identify and secure project funding from federal, state, regional and local resources.
6. To jointly support planning and early project development efforts of rail station improvements that would support existing train service levels or such levels authorized by the Host Railroad(s).
7. To collaboratively improve and increase community outreach in Northern California to improve community understanding and support of the 2012 Business Plan and the proposed projects in Northern California.
8. To communicate and coordinate with the Southern California and MTC/Caltrain MOU stakeholders to ensure continuity for the traveling public when moving between the “Bookends”, of the California Unified Rail Service network, and high-speed rail service.

### **Recommendations**

This item is for information only. Because no specific funding commitments are made as a result of this MOU, no Board action is required. Subsequent funding agreements will be presented to the Board for approval as necessary to implement improvements.